SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FELLOWSHIP

Newsletter

Vol. 5 No. 8

October 1971

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Administration of a rapidly growing organization can be exciting. There are times though when the details seem to multiply more rapidly than the time and staff available, but all things considered -- SFF offers a tremendous challenge and a wonderful opportunity for spiritual expression.

SFF is making remarkable progress in meeting the challenge of growth, but we will need to broaden our financial base in the months and years to come. We don't want to increase our base dues of $10 for an individual and $15 for a husband and wife, because we want to encourage people to become members and be introduced to the benefits that SFF provides. However, without additional contributions from members we could not provide such services.

Voluntary contributions are being made regularly by many members for which we are grateful. In the past week or so, for example, three members sent in $100 each in gratitude for benefits received and with the desire to increase their support of SFF's work.

Shortly, we will make our annual special gift solicitation, and we hope you will consider this your opportunity to contribute even a dollar a month.

Another way to help is to consider another category of membership when you renew. Whatever you can afford will be deeply appreciated. We need

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FIRST REGIONAL SEMINAR

On Thursday, October 28, the Executive Council meets in the Gahanna Community Church, Gahanna, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. The Regional Seminar for members in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee follows. Registration opens at 6:30 p.m. All members are welcome to this first seminar led by our Council Members.

Rev. W. LeCato Edwards, curator of Rev. John Wesley's birthplace in Epworth, England, will address the opening session Thursday, 8:00 p.m. on "Life Eternal Here and Hereafter." Speakers are President Ross K. Sweeny, Rev. Parkinson and Cy Tucker. Council members will participate in the Healing Service Friday evening.

Workshops begin Friday morning on Spiritual Survival, The Holy Spirit and Psychic Works, Organizing New SFF Groups, Parapsychology, Technical Aspects of Spiritual Healing, Mind Control and Bio-Feedback, What the Aura Tells about You, Development Circle, and more! Registration for workshops will be limited. After Oct. 16 phone (614) 866-4327 evenings. $3.00 per session - total $26.00. Registrar: Mr. Bert Japikse, 7471 Rodebaugh Rd., Renoldsburg, Ohio.

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your continuing support in SFF's growing program of spiritual awareness and the activities that contribute to this important work.

Yours in Fellowship
Robert D. Ericsson

NEWS NOTES

● Chicago May 18-20 Annual Conference, Bismarck Hotel;May 17 National Seminar for Group Leaders.

● Northfield, Minn. June 25-July 1 SFF Retreat at Carleton College.

● Gettysburg, Pa. July 23-29 SFF Retreat at Gettysburg College.

● Atlanta, Georgia August 20-27 (tentative) SFF Retreat, Emory University at Oxford.

● Bellefontaine, Ohio (October 16-18 Ambrose and Olga Worrall "Spiritual Healings"; write Mrs. J. Porter, P.O. Box 579, or call (513) 592-6611.

● Joliet Oct. 23 All day seminar on "Eastern and Western Mysticism" Rev. W. LeCato Edwards of Epworth, England, Rev. Paul L. Higgins; Workshops. Joliet Street Methodist Church.

● Chicago North Shore October 21 Dr. Frank A. Brown, Prof. at N. U. "Cosmic Clocks" Evanston 8:00 p.m.

● Caro, Michigan Each Sunday night Series on "Life After Death" Rev. Alex Holmes, First Presbyterian Church, 7:00 p.m.

● Vincennes, Indiana November 16 Rev. Dorothy Moore "The Psychic and the Growing Intelligence" phone Mrs. Black (831) 812-4764.

● Philadelphia October 21 Rev. Mangiamelli "Reality of Spirit Communication" Arch Street Methodist Church, 8:00 p.m.

● Baltimore October 10 Sister Justa Smith "Researching Spiritual Healing" Study groups are forming. For information, write Mrs. B. Mahoney, 2 Thorndyke Garth, Phoenix, Maryland.

● Washington, D.C. October 24 Rev. Cecil L. Morgan "Does Christianity Square With Science Today?" 1611 - 16th Street NW, 2 p.m., Nov. 7 Rev. J. Gordon Melton, SFF Field Representative "How Real Is Spiritual Healing."

NEWS NOTES

● New York October 18 Col. Frank Adams "The Faces of Jesus" Madison Avenue Baptist Church, 7:30 p.m.

● Atlanta October 22-23 Elsie Sechrist "How to Interpret Dreams" First Methodist Church.

● San Diego November 5 Sebastian Temple "Phenomenon of Man" 4102 Marlboro Avenue, 8:00 p.m.

● Los Gatos October 26 and 29 Larry and Anna Hill "Psychic and Spiritual Healers" 15850 West Road, 7:45 p.m.

● Rev. J. Gordon Melton, SFF Field Representative will help form study groups and new areas. Write for available dates: Oct. 19 & 25 Kansas City, Oct. 20-24 Sioux City -Omaha, Oct. 26 Des Moines, Nov. 5-6 Washington, D.C., Nov. 10-11 North New Jersey, Nov. 19-21 Schenectady, Nov. 22 Syracuse.

● The Spiritual Frontiers Seminar tour to the classical world, which includes cruising the Aegean Sea, departs April 10, 1972, under the direction of Rev. and Mrs. Paul L. Higgins, 212 Sherman St., Joliet, Ill. Reservations need to be made by Nov.

MORE REGIONAL SEMINARS

On December 9-11 a Regional Seminar in Austin, Texas for members in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas and New Mexico will be led by Western Region Chairman, Rev. Leslie Palmer of San Diego, California. Registration will be limited to 200. For information write Mr. Bill Boykin, 7605 Rockpoint Drive, Austin, Texas.

On February 24-26, 1972 a Regional Seminar in New Jersey for members in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia will be led by Executive Council members. For information and volunteers write Mr. John Deehan, 107 N. Clinton Ave., Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

RESEARCH CHAIRMAN APPOINTED

Robert H. Ashby

Robert Howe Ashby was appointed Chairman of the Research Committee by President Ross K. Sweeny in September. Mr. Ashby, his wife Jennifer, who is a physician, and their three children recently returned from London where he was Director of the High School, The American School in London. They reside in Kansas City. A graduate of Kenyon College, M.A. from Duke University, he did post graduate work at Edinburgh University in Scotland. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Psychical Research, member of the British Society for Psychical Research and Fellow and former Honorary Research Officer of the College for Psychic Studies in London; he is former president of both the Kansas City and St. Louis Psychical Research Societies; writer of articles (see Psychic magazine April 1971 issue) and author of a forthcoming book A Guidebook to the Study of Psychical Research. He is a lecturer and seminar leader on psychical research. Highly recommended by our Research Committee Vice-Chairman, Canon William V. Rauscher, we are pleased to welcome Mr. Ashby to SFF's challenging committee assignment.

COLLEGES - SEMINARIES - SCHOOLS

The Committee on Colleges and Seminaries is seeking opportunities for SFF to receive and to share information on what is happening in schools, universities and seminaries in the area of the paranormal. One method being considered is a newsletter.

If you are interested, please write to Dr. L. Richard Batzler, R. D. 3, Frederick, Md. 21701 and state: 1) I would like to be on the newsletter mailing list; 2) I shall be able to supply information (on persons, places, events) for the newsletter; 3) Names, addresses and occupations of other persons who may be interested are enclosed.

NEW PATRON AND LIFE MEMBERS

Two members increased their membership categories to Patron Members: Mrs. Mildred Lewandowski and Mrs. F. Y. Casey. Thank you for sharing your "gifts" to support SFF's program and services.

Welcome to Mrs. Marguerite B. Sheeder who contributed $100 toward a Life Membership in SFF. How wonderful to have new enthusiastic support!

IN MEMORIUM

Mrs. Betty Taylor-Galligan, a member of our New York Area, was killed in a tragic accident on September 30,1971. It was reported that she attempted to escape through a window from her apartment during a burglary and fell to the pavement. Let us hold Betty in the light in our prayers.

Dr. Walter N. Pahnke, famed researcher passed to spirit in a scuba diving accident this summer. His last article in the 1971 Winter SFF Journal recalled his friendship with Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, deceased founder of the Parapsychology Foundation who inspired him as a medical student to become interested in psychical research.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The SFF Journal invites you to write the Editor. This will be a new sharing of ideas and opinions for members. Space limitations may require editing of letters printed. Not all letters can be printed or answered. Letters must be signed. Write, Editor, SFF Journal, c/o Canon Wm. V. Rauscher, 62 Delaware Street, Woodbury, New Jersey 08096.

ARTHUR FORD'S BOOK

Copies of The Life Beyond Death by Arthur Ford will soon be ready for mailing to SFF members. "It is a primer in the field of understanding life after death." "It makes the invisible real." "It offers solace and hope to the bereaved." "A last, fitting tribute to his life mission." Send $6.95 plus 35¢ to SFF, 800 Custer, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

MEDITATION IN SONG

Requests for recorded songs by Grace Brame can now be filled. Cassettes of the Memorial Service during the 1971 Annual Conference in Chicago record her singing "Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit (Watchful's Song)" from Pilgrims Progress and "O Day Full of Grace." Beautiful. $4.95.

RELIGION AND RESEARCH

Wanted for an anthology - copies of the best articles and books (or names and references) thus far produced on the subject of Religion and Psychical Research which may lie unappreciated in obscure libraries and journals. Write Dr. J. Schoneberg Setzer, 9 Otsego Street, Oneonta, New York.

NEWSLETTER LESSONS

The previous three-lesson series on "The Psychic Stream in the Church" by Rev. J. Gordon Melton brought this comment from Laurence T. Heron, former editor of SFF's Gate Way: "You are performing a great service in these writings - the last lesson was excellent. Before reading it, I had very much underestimated Montanus. Keep it up."

The enclosed lesson is the first of two parts on mysticism: "The Mystics--Bearers of the Psychic Tradition in the Middle Ages."

SFF RECOGNIZED

Some of our members are concerned about how churches look at SFF. The September issue of The Christian Advocate gives SFF a pat-on-the-back in "The Church and the Paranormal" and concludes: "...Minister and laymen in the local church should begin to communicate with each other about the paranormal. This should be relatively easy. My experience is that laymen are waiting for someone to bring up the subject. As soon as the minister opens up about his interest, the questions will begin flowing in. Our Sunday..."

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP
(as filed September 1971)

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Statistical Date	Average for Preceding Year	Single Issue Nearest Filing
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Free distribution	20	20
Mail subscriptions	5,916	5,469
Total paid circulation	5,916	5,469
Total distribution	5,936	5,489
Office use, leftover, etc.	635	1,676
Total	6,571	7,165

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
(signed) Rheva B. Grau, Administrative Assistant

The Mystics --
Bearers of the Psychic Tradition in the Middle Ages

> Great art Thou, O Lord and ... man would praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise, for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee.

So speaks St. Augustine in the opening paragraph of his Confessions, written at the turn of the fifth century. Augustine stands as a fitting symbol of the transition that the Western church underwent in the fourth and fifth centuries. He knows by observation the last dying remnants of the psychic gifts and describes at length the many healings he has witnessed. While not yet a true mystic, in his Confessions and other later works he is definitely leaning toward the inner-life orientation on God that becomes an obsession in the middle ages. Augustine stands as a recipient of some of the last drops of the then dammed psychic stream and points to the one channel left wide open in which it could flow--mysticism.

What is Mysticism?

Mysticism is a form of the psychic life; and to understand it, one must understand the psychical area of man's life. When the word "psychical" or "psychic" is used, it symbolizes man's capacity to contact, perceive, and gain knowledge from a world beyond the five (or eight) senses. People who actualize this capacity report the gaining of information by an inner sight or sound, the contacting of a power which can be channeled for healing, the invisioning of the future or past, or the talking with persons who no longer exist on this earthly plane. Some go beyond these rather mundane things and testify that they actually contact a transcendent reality, a reality usually labeled by Christians as God. St. Theresa of Avila describes it thusly:

> We now come to speak of divine and spiritual marriage ... this secret union takes place in the innermost centre of the soul where God himself must dwell. I believe no door is required to enter it. I say 'no door is required', for all I have hitherto described seems to come through the senses and faculties as must the representation of our Lord's Humanity, but what passes in the union of the spiritual nuptials is very different. Here God appears in the soul's centre, not by an imaginary but an intellectual vision, though far more delicate than those

> seen before, just as He appeared to the apostles without having entered by the door ... (John 20:19.) ....Spiritual marriage is like rain falling from heaven into a river or stream and becoming one and the same liquid, so that the river or stream and rain water cannot be divided or ... (it) may also be likened to a room into which a bright light enters through two windows--though divided when it enters, the light becomes one and the same.

What is this psychic encounter with transcendent reality like? Mystics are quick to turn our attention from some popular misconceptions of what the mystic experience is. The experience is not just some fuzzy notion to think about. It is not to be confused with clairvoyant visions although it does not stand in contradiction to them. It is not irrational, but rather beyond rationality. The first term used to describe the experience is '<u>ineffable</u>.' There are no words to describe it. Its 'transcendent' nature can only be pointed toward with rich metaphors, as Theresa did in the above quoted passage. Its ineffable character also points to the state of consciousness of the individual experiencing mystic union. It is one type of what contemporary researchers call an '<u>expanded state of consciousness.beyond sensory intellectual consciousness</u>.' Possibly the research on brain wave emissions, now in its infancy, will do much in the future to enlighten us at this point.

Of the very essence of the mystic experience is the apprehension of the <u>unity</u> of all things. The ultimate unity of existence is common to mysticism, east and west, and the method of describing the union of the self with the all illustrates the fourth characteristic of the experience, <u>its lack of cognitive content</u>. Some mystics following this experience of union are led to explain it in terms of pantheism, the idea that all is one and that one is God and that we are all one in the metaphysical union called God. Western mystics have rarely moved in this direction, however, preferring to describe the union on the emotional and feeling level. We are united in the spirit while not losing our individuality.

As a working definition mysticism might be called the experience of direct contact with transcendent reality which is received in a specific (though not yet fully described) expanded state of consciousness. This experience is <u>ineffable</u>, thus not reducible to pat rational cognitive explanation and is best apprehended by metaphors. It brings with it a feeling of <u>unity</u> with everything. It is without cognitive content. It is also beyond space and time.

The Mystic Way

The mystic experience, in its consummation, is very much the same, and the landmarks which one passes to get to that experience are much the same. Differences, however, arise as soon as the mystic attempts to explain his experience. These differences arise from three causes. First, life prior to the mystic consummation gives each mystic a different content from which to describe his journey along the mystic way. Secondly, along the way different points are more significant to one individual than another. Some mystics are grasped most strongly by the first illumination. Some concentrate on the difficulty of the cleansing of the self. Others remember the variant phenomena encountered on the pathway, while others remember only the pathway's end. Thirdly, there is a wide variation in individuals abilities to describe fruitfully the experience of the mystic life.

With the multitude of variations in descriptions of mysticism, an outline description of the path followed by mystics and common to all of them emerges very quickly to students of mystic literature. The Neo-platonist gave this path trod by mystics a name 'the mystic way.' It consists of three parts--purgation, illumination, union.

By purgation a mystic means the purification of character and the development of detachment from mundane concerns. Such refining of the soul is a co-operative act of the self and the transcendent as it flows into the self. Purgation begins almost immediately upon the pathway and continues in stages until just prior to union. In its latter stages, the name dark night of the soul is often applied.

Illumination is both a moment along the pathway and a series of moments. Mystics agree that there is a point at which one first bumps-up-against God, and at this point one is infused by a healthy dose of His light and power. This point is the first illumination and the first of a series of encounters with the transcendent that alternate with the continuing purgative process in the self's attention. Illumination, because it is such a startling and life-changing experience, is often confused with the goal of the mystic, union, but far from being the end is merely the beginning of the life in transcendent realms.

Union is the final end of the mystic life. Rarely obtained, it is described as the complete and perfect harmony and oneness of the spirit of man with God. Once achieved, it allows one to live in the presence of the transcendent continually so that, like Theresa, one can speak of being married to God. In Western tradition this experience usually drove one away from the cell of contemplation (and could be distinguished from illumination in this way). St. Francis,

St. John of the Cross, George Fox, all were led back into the world in a life of active service. This reentrance into the world is the main differentiating factors between eastern and western mysticism and points to the superiority of the latter.

Carrying on the Dialogue

The mystics represent the church looking for an opening in the midst of religion's slowness. The psychic stream in some forms was dammed by the rejection of Montanus and the growth of nominal Christianity. But the mystics found the opening and created one of the great eras of spiritual history and church reform and wrote many of the great classics of spiritual literature. Like the mystics, the Christian psychic community is looking for an opening. One significant opening is Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship as it leads the church in re-examining its psychic heritage and as it offers to the church the fuller spiritual life to be found by participation in such things as mystic prayer and spiritual healing. Be on the look-out for the open doors at your local church. Maybe mystic prayer is out, but possibly there is interest in a healing ministry. Maybe prophecy is unbelievable to most, but interest is there in dreams. The spirit blows where it will; be ready to respond.

For Further Reading

St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night of the Soul, various editions.

St. Theresa of Avila, The Interior Castle, various editions.

Underhill, Evelyn, The Mystics of the Church. New York: George H. Doran, n.d.
This is one of several of hers which could be cited as equally profitable.